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BULLETIN
OF THE
TORREY BOTANICAL CLUB

SEPTEMBER 1912

The ferns and flowering plants of Nantucket—X

EUGENE P. BICKNELL

GERANIACEAE

GERANIUM MACULATUM L.

Common, but so retiring an inhabitant of dense thickets as to be little noticeable. Like other spring-flowering plants on Nantucket it comes into bloom much later than at more inland points in the same general latitude. In fresh flower May 30, 1910; just in bloom June 5, 1911; last flowers June 22, 1910.

GERANIUM ROBERTIANUM L.

This fragile plant of rocky woods and ravines is one of the surprises of Nantucket, where it has somehow found its way and hides under the cedars on Coatue, a narrow arm of sand, some five miles in length, which protects the harbor from Nantucket Sound. Long ago it was detected there by Mr. Dame—Mrs. Owen's record runs "Under red cedars near the head of the harbor." It probably occurs throughout the extent of Coatue, since I met with it near Second Point, Sept. 7, 1904, scattered here and there among the cedars and completely screened from view in the recesses beneath their low spreading branches. It remains well established there, where I observed it in full flower July 13, 1912.

A single plant was seen in the town, growing under a porch on Liberty Street, in 1909, and again June 16, 1910, then in full bloom.

GERANIUM CAROLINIANUM L.

Occasional as a weed in disturbed or once cultivated ground,

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sometimes abounding but readily giving way and disappearing before conditions only slightly changed from those that enabled it to thrive. Mrs. Owen has told us that it was once found in abundance by Mr. Dame in a field near Sachacha, and Mr. Floyd has given me the following records: Gibbs Pond, 1901, and Monomoy, 1904, Mrs. Nellie F. Flynn; Pocomo, 1907, Mrs. Mabel P. Robinson. I did not myself meet with it until September 1907, a single tuft of basal leaves where soil had been upturned on the plains east of Miacomet Pond. Here the next year, on June 17, were a few plants in flower and fruit. On June 2, 1909, unusually widespreading plants in full flower were scattered through a once cultivated field at Shimmo Valley farm, where a year later not a plant was to be found. On June 4, 1911, a solitary plant just in flower was met west of the town and an abundant growth in full flower June 10 in an old field at Quidnet. It seems to be spreading on the island and getting to be more common.

**GERANIUM PUSILLUM* L.

Now not uncommon in waste ground in and near the town but evidently a newcomer within recent years. It appears to have been found first on Nantucket by Mrs. Flynn, "Pleasant Street, 1904," fide F. G. Floyd, who also collected it in Hillers Lane in 1906. I first met with it the same year, on Aug. 11, in flower and fruit in waste ground west of the town, where also it was flowering Sept. 20, 1907, but had disappeared the following year. In 1909 it was abundant and in full flower June 6 in a field west of the town and was also found a mile to the south. In June 1910, it was abundant and of unusually large size in a lot on Pleasant Street and was seen for the first time at Siasconset, growing by a fisherman's cottage below the bluff. In 1911 it had appeared in a lawn on the Cliff Road. It occurs also in Edgartown on Marthas Vineyard, where I observed it on a lawn, still in flower Oct. 10, 1911.

**GERANIUM MOLLE* L.

A single cluster in a weedy place off Centre Street, near North Street, June 3, 1911, showing its first open flower. Meadow below Sea Cliff Inn, 1897, Mrs. Mabel P. Robinson, fide F. G. Floyd.

ERODIUM CICUTARIUM (L.) L'Her.

Mrs. Owen has recorded single plants found many years ago on three occasions in the town, one in 1850 and one in 1851. No recent collector seems to have met with it.

OXALIDACEAE

OXALIS STRICTA L.

Common in fields and open places in all quarters of the island, often thriving along sandy shores; especially common on sandy levels about the south shore ponds. Just in flower May 30, 1909; June 7, 1908; in full flower June 3, 1911; flowering during the summer and through September; capsules full size June 18, 1908.

For so delicate a plant this species is remarkably tenacious of life under hard conditions and accommodates itself as well to sterile and stony situations as to the rich soils of gardens and cultivated grounds. These adjustments are not without rather wide variations in habit and characters by which the species is marked off into several noteworthy forms. Heavy soils produce pale green canescent plants of large size, sometimes having a spread of 2.5 dm., and bearing large flowers and capsules. A greatly reduced form of brighter green color and with smaller flowers and capsules belongs to hard or gravelly soils; it is of contracted habit, often forming close mats only 5–10 cm. wide and bearing very small crowded leaves and prostrate or even procumbent and rooting stems. Another variety if, indeed, it be not of more moment, which I have met with only in the streets of the town, is of a dull green color, the comparatively few and large leaves purplish tinged or even deep purple throughout; the leaflets, often strongly declined, are more strongly ciliate than in the commoner forms and their lower surface less distinctly cellular-alveolate under a lens; the flowers are large, having rather broad and blunt sepals, which become 7 mm. long, and the dried corollas are often upborne on the apex of the capsule; the slender styles are twice the length of those found in associated forms of the plant and are much less spreading.

**OXALIS CYMOSA* Small.

Seen only in the town, where it is frequent by streetsides and in old yards, appearing as if introduced. It develops much later

than *Oxalis stricta* and may be seen with its earliest leaves only beginning to unfold when the other is in full bloom. First leaves appearing June 6, 1909; first flowers June 16, 1911; June 18, 1908; June 21, 1910; flowering through September.

LINACEAE

LINUM USITATISSIMUM L.

Casual and transient. It grew sparingly in an old field in 1899, but I have seen it since on Nantucket only in waste ground at Surfside, July 9, 1912, the most forward buds showing blue tips. It is included in Mrs. Owen's catalogue, and Mr. Floyd's notes report it as having been collected by Miss Nina K. Goddard, in 1895, and by Mrs. Mary A. Albertson.

LINUM VIRGINIANUM L.

Not uncommon on the eastern side of the island from Squam to Tom Never's Pond, especially at outlying points about Saul's Hills, growing in dry sandy soil. Elsewhere it was met with only at a single station in Trot's Hills. The young plants may be detected early in June and in some seasons are but a few inches high late in the month. The fruit is mature by the end of August, although flowering may continue until after the middle of September.

*LINUM STRIATUM Walt.

Border of Waqutuquaib Pond, Sept. 9, 1904, a small colony of well-fruited plants still bearing a few flowers. This is one of the rather numerous group of Nantucket plants that have been found only at a single station.

**Linum* (*Cathartolinum*) *intercursum* sp. nov.

Perennial, erect, slender, striate-angled, 1.5–3 dm. or even 5 dm. high, branched at the top, the branches 1–8 cm. long, erect or erectly ascending, simple or sparsely corymbose; leaves numerous, pale green, erect or ascending, oval-oblong to narrowly oblong and oblanceolate, acute, 7–18 cm. long, 1.5–5 mm. wide, the lowermost and those of the basal shoots oblong-obovate and rounded at the end; sepals ovate to lanceolate-oblong, acuminate, keeled, mostly three-nerved, 1.5–2.5 mm. long, the inner minutely glandular-ciliate; corolla yellow, spreading 8–12 mm.; pedicels 1–4 mm. long; capsule greenish purple, ovoid-conic, usually broader than high, acute, 1.5–2 mm. long, readily dehiscent, the carpels cuspidate; false septa long-ciliate; seeds 1.5 mm. long.

East Massachusetts to southern New Jersey, Georgia, and Alabama. Type from Nantucket, Sept. 11, 1899, in Herb. N. Y. Botanical Garden. Flowers on Nantucket from July (July 8, 1912) until well into September.

This is the small, yellow-flowered *Linum* that is a characteristic plant of Nantucket, where it is scattered widely over the moorland and commons and is sometimes found about cranberry bogs in lower grounds. It was first collected by me in 1899 on the supposition that it was the then little known *Linum medium* (Planch.) Britton. Subsequently it proved to be not uncommon on Marthas Vineyard and on Long Island, where it is one of the noteworthy plants of the Hempstead Plains. Early Nantucket specimens submitted to Dr. J. K. Small were referred to *Linum floridanum* (Planch.) Trelease, which had not then been found north of South Carolina, and in the North American Flora the range of that species was extended north to Massachusetts. This disposition of the plant was also adopted in the seventh edition of Gray's Manual. I have seen much of this *Linum* since it was first collected and have learned in the field how distinct it is from *Linum medium*, and now a review of herbarium material leads me here to propose it as distinct from *Linum floridanum* also. If we examine a well-fruited specimen of the latter, say Curtiss' "North American Plants," no. 412, or his "Second Distribution," no. 6850, we find that the conspicuous yellow bony capsules are ovoid-subglobose to ovoid-oblong, 2.5–3.5 mm. high and rounded or even subtruncate at the top. In size and form as well as in color they are thus in marked contrast to the greenish purple conic and acute thinner-walled capsule of the more northern plant. They are also much more tardily dehiscent, the carpels not cuspidate and with non-ciliate septa; also, the false septum is more complete and the seeds, of a more reddish color, are one third larger. *Linum floridanum* is a taller and paler green plant than *Linum intercursum*, its leaves thicker and more rigid, narrower and more attenuate, and sharply cuspidate with pale hardened points; the flowers appear to be larger and the rootlets are fewer and less delicately fibrous. The leaves and the capsules of *Linum floridanum* conform closely to those of *Linum medium*. *Linum intercursum* in its angled branches and acute capsule with cilia-bearing septa, shows an approach to

characters of *Linum sulcatum* Riddell, and its bracteal leaves sometimes show a submarginal thickening that recalls the trinerved leaves of that species. *Linum sulcatum* has been attributed to Nantucket, and I suppose there is no doubt at all that this species was mistaken for it.

In addition to numerous specimens collected on Nantucket, Marthas Vineyard, and Long Island the following collections may be cited: Georgia, Cobb County, dry woods, elevation 1,020 ft., July 12, 1900, *Roland M. Harper 213*. Alabama, Clay County, Sept. 24, 1897, *F. S. Earle 947*; Coosa County, Sept. 29, 1897, *F. S. Earle 1035*. These specimens are the only ones I have seen from south of New Jersey, where I collected the plant at Wildwood, Cape May County, May 31, 1897, just in flower, and where Mr. Norman Taylor has more recently collected it at New Brunswick, Middlesex County, and also in Monmouth County.

The purport of the evidence would seem to be that *Linum intercursum* is a plant of the coastal plain from Massachusetts to New Jersey, extending southwestward in the hilly country into Alabama, while *Linum floridanum* is a coastwise species of the southern states, passing inland at low elevations and ranging from North Carolina to Mississippi. The most northern specimens I have seen of the latter are from Craven County, North Carolina, collected at Newbern, Aug. 1, 1898, *Thos. H. Kearney, Jr., 1978*. Apparently it is a plant of wet pine barrens and low grounds, whereas *Linum intercursum* inhabits preferably dry sandy places.

SIMARUBACEAE

**AILANTHUS GLANDULOSA* Desf.

In 1899 this tree had become established at several places in the neighborhood of the town. It has not since greatly increased its foothold and though slowly spreading scarcely strays away from places where it was originally planted. It is also spontaneous at Siasconset. It comes into leaf later in the season perhaps than any other Nantucket tree. As late as June 7, 1911, it appeared nearly naked, showing only small tufts of coppery red leaves at the tips of the branchlets.

POLYGALACEAE

POLYGALA CRUCIATA L.

One of the commonest plants of sandy open bogs, often abundant in sphagnum about the borders of ponds. In full flower in August and September.

POLYGALA VERTICILLATA L.

Dryish sandy places in low grounds, scarce. Little Neck; roadside at Eatfire; Coskaty. In full flower at the middle of September.

POLYGALA VIRIDESCENS L.

Low grounds, rare. Roadside along Trot's Swamp, Aug. 16, 1906, in full flower; near Bache's Harbor, in full flower, Sept. 17, 1907. This species is given in Mrs. Owen's catalogue without mention of any locality.

POLYGALA POLYGAMA Walt.

One of the characteristic plants of the island, widely disseminated over the moorland and commons and flowering from the middle of June until the middle of September. White flowers are not rare. Flower buds showing pink June 10, 1911, June 11, 1908; first flowers June 15, 1908, June 15, 1910; Tuckernuck, June 17, 1911.

EUPHORBIACEAE

EUPHORBIA POLYGONIFOLIA L.

In white sand along the beaches and back among the dunes; common. Plants very small but recognizable June 25, 1910; just in flower July 13, 1912; in full flower through September.

EUPHORBIA MACULATA L.

Not uncommon about the shores of Miacomet Pond; met with elsewhere only at a few stations not far from the town. Just in flower July 2, 1912. In full flower through September.

EUPHORBIA PRESII Guss.

Reported by Mrs. Owen as having been found by Judge Churchill and Mr. Deane by the railroad track near the town—doubtless a casual introduction only, since no one else seems ever to have met with it.

EUPHORBIA CYPARISSIAS L.

Fence borders and about farmhouses and abandoned grounds. Just in flower May 30, 1909; in full flower June 3, 1911, June 15, 1910; passing out of bloom later in the month. No set fruit observed.

CALLITRICHACEAE

CALLITRICHE HETEROPHYLLA Pursh.

Common in brooks, pools, and springy places or on drying mud where the water has receded. Mature fruit June 3, 1911, Sept. 5, 1904.

EMPETRACEAE

COREMA CONRADII Torrey.

Locally abundant in the southeast quarter of the island, extending from north of the third milestone on the state road to Siasconset, within a quarter of a mile of the shore and into the South Pasture. This general area extends in a northwest and southeast direction south of Saul's Hills for a distance of about four miles and is two miles or more in greatest breadth. It is a territory of level or gently rolling plains and open barrens of scrub oak and affords conditions that manifestly meet well the needs of this very local species. Where most abundant it grows in widespread profusion, covering the ground with a springy heathlike carpet for rods together, perhaps even acres, or when of more interrupted growth forming firm cushionlike masses several yards across. Here and there it has extended its growth thickly along old wagon trails on the moors, which have opened a way for it through the dense carpeting of bearberry with which its more lively green makes striking contrast. Parts of these long unused roadways have thus been almost completely obliterated, the old wagon ruts once deeply scored in the sandy soil being marked only by shallow parallel grooves along the dense masses of this diminutive compact shrub cushioned up between them. I have not myself met with it outside of the general area indicated except near Tawpaushas Swamp, about two miles from the town. Mrs. Owen, however, mentions what may be still another locality, "Road from town to Polpis," her authority being Miss Tallant, 1867. It is still abundant in low places bordering Tom Never's

Swamp, just as it there grew long ago as reported to Mrs. Owen by Mr. Dame. Extensive growths of this plant are undoubtedly destroyed from time to time by fires which pass over the moors. I have noticed wide areas so devastated where the railroad traverses its general habitat, the fires having been started by sparks from passing trains.

Green fruit June 13, 1908; fruit mature and readily falling June 24, 1910; scarcely mature July 2, 1912.

ANACARDIACEAE

RHUS COPALLINA L.

Common, mainly on the eastern side of the island. Leaves only beginning to unfold June 7, 1911; in full flower Sept. 15, 1907.

**RHUS HIRTA* (L.) Sudworth.

It may be open to doubt whether the staghorn sumac is native to Nantucket. A scattered growth has long occupied a field along an old cemetery south of the town, and a few rather ill-favored shrubs grow along a field border by the Surfside road in the suburbs, where they were first seen in 1899. But there is no certainty that these are of native origin, since the species has been used as an ornamental shrub in several yards in the town and also about a distant farmhouse in Squam. Better evidence that it belongs to the island's natural flora is afforded by a strong colony of full tree stature along a steep bank between Union and Orange streets. Although now pent in in the midtown and forming part of the back yards of buildings that abut on either street, this bank must have once formed a prominent bluff corresponding to the "Cliff" on the north side of the town. The evident age of these sumacs and their position on the side of the bluff allow strong presumption that they are a relic of its native vegetation. The larger trees are certainly not less than twenty-two feet in height, and one measured in 1909 was twenty-eight inches in circumference one foot above the base. This sumac occurs on Marthas Vineyard on a bank at Tashmoo Pond, where it is clearly native.

RHUS GLABRA L.

Frequent in dry ground about the borders of thickets in the northeastern section of the island from Shawkemo to Pocomo,

Squam, and Sachacha. Elsewhere seen only among the Miacomet Pines, a few small plants, 1909, and west of Reed Pond, a single sprout, 1908. Close panicles of green buds July 11, 1912. On Nantucket this sumac is not ordinarily over two to four feet high, only exceptionally reaching a stature of five or six feet, and it is often the merest dwarf. The smallest fruiting plant seen was only six inches high, including a fruiting panicle $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches thick. The largest fruiting panicle observed was $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches long by $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick.

Much variation in the leaves is shown even among plants of the same colony. The more common type of leaflet is lanceolate, sharply serrate, and the color of the upper surface rather a dull green. Side by side with plants so characterized occur others having much broader, subentire leaflets, dark shining green above and unusually whitened beneath.

TOXICODENDRON VERNIX (L.) Shafer.

Frequent, or rather common, in bogs throughout. Leaves beginning to appear June 1, 1909; leaves very small and undeveloped June 10, 1911.

TOXICODENDRON VULGARE Mill.

Abundant and of wide variation, quite probably including more than one species. Dr. E. L. Greene, who has kindly looked over my series of specimens, is rather definitely of this opinion, but points out to me that no pronouncement should be made in the absence of mature fruit. My collections, all made in June, bear panicles of buds or freshly opened flowers and clusters of the weathered fruit left over from the year before and having little or nothing remaining of the pericarp. The most abundant form on Nantucket is the common erect shrubby plant of low grounds, with ovate, often subcordate, shining leaflets, more or less rusty pubescent on the veins beneath, and globose or depressed globose, pubescent fruit. Very similar but taller and sometimes high-climbing forms have thinner, less shining leaves, often cuneate at the base, and differ further in their more diffuse inflorescence and rather larger flowers. A form with essentially similar inflorescence keeps to the ground in pine groves, running among the beds of pine needles and putting up short erect branchlets from its pro-

cumbent stems. All of these forms have essentially entire leaflets, but a low-climbing form found on Coskaty has thin leaflets mostly cuneate at the base and coarsely dentate. Most distinct of all is a plant of compact and clustered small foliage and prostrate and rooting stems, which thrives in the driest and most exposed reaches of pure white sand. By comparison in the field with freer-growing larger-leaved forms this showed marked differences in the inflorescence, which was sparser and much more contracted, even congested, with considerably smaller flowers, the anthers especially being less than half the size, by actual measurement 0.5–0.75 mm. as against 1.5–1.75 mm. The small fruit is densely pubescent.

ILICACEAE

Ilex opaca Ait.

Twenty-four years ago Mrs. Owen wrote that the holly was becoming rare on Nantucket, having been cut for firewood, but that it still grew in swamps at the eastern end of the island. It is indeed regrettably rare at the present day, and I have met with it only in secluded spots in Beechwood, and a single tree farther west, in Polpis. At the main Beechwood locality there was still in 1910 a scattered growth of strong trees, the largest 10–15 feet in height, with trunks of 10–12 inches in circumference. The Polpis tree, in 1900, was about 10 feet high, the trunk 14 inches around, one foot above the base.

In July 1912 it was found that most of the fine trees in Beechwood had been severely mutilated, presumably for Christmas decorations, the entire tops of most of them having been cut away.

Ilex glabra (L.) A. Gray.

A characteristic shrub of the eastern and the western sides of the island, ornamenting low thickets or fringing the borders of ponds with its masses of dark lustrous green. It is one of the few species of Nantucket which is common on both sides of the island but is almost wanting in the intervening territory, in which I have seen it at only a few stations: Pout Ponds, Tawpaushas Swamp, Shimmo Ponds, a single cluster, and a small patch among pines on the Surfside road—an unusual situation. It is common at Long Pond, at the western end of the island, and especially so

about ponds and bogs in Polpis, on the eastern side, and occurs in Saul's Hills, in Squam, and about the borders of Tom Never's Swamp. Small flower buds June 10, 1908; first flowers July 2, 1912, generally in full blossom July 6; green fruit at the middle of September 1899.

ILEX BRONXENSIS Britton.

Wet thickets and low grounds, either strongly typical or varying toward the next. The most pronounced examples, collected in Shawkemo, bore broadly obovate or obovate-oblong leaves 2.5–5 cm. wide and 5–8 cm. in length of blade. First flowers July 4, 1912.

As here understood, this is our common northern winterberry, which is replaced southward by true *Ilex verticillata* (L.) A. Gray (*I. verticillata* var. *padifolia* Watson, *Prinos padifolius* Willd.). The latter, although common near New York City and frequent on Long Island, appears not to extend eastward beyond southern New England.

**Ilex fastigiata* sp. (?) nov.

A closely much branched shrub similar to *Ilex bronxensis* but of more compact habit, the numerous ascending branchlets usually crowded and often closely fastigate, the young bark pale, becoming dull bluish or brownish gray; leaves glabrous, or loosely pubescent on the veins beneath, very numerous, much smaller, narrower and more attenuate than those of *I. bronxensis*, dark green and shining as if polished or often dull bluish green with a subglaucous bloom, becoming coriaceous, slender-petioled; blades narrowly lanceolate to oblong-lanceolate or oblong, tapering to base and apex, often abruptly attenuate or short-caudate, commonly 2–4 cm. long (1–5 cm.) by 1–1.5 cm. wide (0.7–2 cm.), or sometimes much larger on the new shoots; serrulate to finely serrate with narrow-pointed, often outcurved, rigid teeth, or incised-serrate with the teeth almost spinescent, the margins undulate-revolute when dry; flowers on slender pedicels 1.5–4 mm. long, the corolla spreading 5–8 mm.; calyx lobes ciliate, mostly obtuse or rounded; fruit commonly smaller, more clustered, and deeper red in color than in *I. bronxensis*.

Common on Nantucket in low grounds, often clustered along wet thickets, and not infrequent in dry barrens. Ordinarily it is from five to eight feet in height but becomes fifteen feet high, with stems seventeen inches in basal girth. Nearly in flower June 18,

1908; first flowers July 1, 1912, everywhere in full flower July 10. The fruit remains green as late as the middle of September, maturing later in that month and in October. Type from near Long Pond, July 10, 1912, in full flower, in Herb. N. Y. Botanical Garden.

In color of bark and form of leaf this winterberry often calls to mind *Ilex verticillata* (L.) A. Gray rather than *I. bronxensis*, notwithstanding its nearer relationship with the latter. Like each of them it has a parallel thin-leaved shade form and a broader-leaved *cyclophylla* form.

This well-arisen scion of *I. bronxensis* largely replaces that species on Nantucket and to a less extent supplants it on Martha's Vineyard, but I have never seen it on Long Island. In its authentic pattern it bears a contrast to *I. bronxensis* that is altogether striking in plants so nearly related. Not any doubt need be entertained that it is no mere casual variation of that species. It is too well declared in the Nantucket flora to have had other cause than some broadly operating influence that has drawn it strongly away from the ordinary mainland type, albeit without having effected a wholly secure detachment. Connecting forms denote well enough its immediate parent, yet everywhere among such confusing intermediates it reports its own individual claim and bears a regional and insular stamp that may well be approved by a name. It is perhaps of no importance at all to classification whether this name be of trinomial or of binomial structure. The status of a plant once understood, it neither adds to nor detracts from the taxonomic facts it stands for, whether it be called by a name made up of two factors or of three. The really important question would seem rather to be, how far a third symbol may needlessly encumber speech and writing and err still further in overweighting nomenclature by leading straightway, and logically, to the polynomial. Here assuredly has taken its source that revived polynomialism already upon us which proceeds unmindful that a name is not a classification; and this notwithstanding that the efficient binomial ever perfectly denotes its object, whether in point of distinction small or great, provided only that it be worthy to be named at all. Its function is nominative, not classificatory. It stands opposed to the false precision of the multiple name now fast

falling into incoherency in its pursuit of impossible distinctions—varieties, large type varieties, small type varieties, states, conditions, and forms. Held to its simple appellative function, the binomial should presently come upon a fair stability undisturbed by those problems of definition and relationship that, because they must continue to trouble our classifications, need not greatly disturb the names of the things we seek to classify.